

Extract from Report No. 67 Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1862 Annual Report

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Superintendent
Agency for the Southern District of California

San Francisco, August 30, 1862

Sir: In conformity with the requirements with the requirements of the Indian department I have the honor to submit this, my annual report, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1862, showing the condition of the various Indian tribes which have been intrusted to my care.

I have but recently returned from my tour of inspection through the entire district under my charge, embracing a tract of country of more than eight hundred miles in length, by about three hundred miles in width.

It is with pleasure that I communicate to you that my endeavors to advance the interests of the Indians on the Tejon reservation in the cultivation of the soil, and subsisting the Indians by their own labor, has been, in a great measure, successful. Last year there was no ground under cultivation; this year I have at least two hundred and fifty acres of wheat and barley grown on the government farm, and about one hundred and fifty acres under cultivation for the Indian camps. The crops of grain are excellent, the grain yielding extraordinarily even for California, averaging from thirty to forty bushels per acre. The Indians in the vicinity of the reservation do not fail to see and appreciate the beneficial results of well applied industry and systematic labor, and are flocking in numbers to the place. There is a great increase over the census taken in November of last year, and the Indian tribes from Kern river, Tihatchipe, Posa Flat, and parts more remote, will soon remove to the reservation.

The Indians properly belonging at present to the Tejon reservation may be numbered at about 1,370, among whom are the following thrifty tribes or bands, (who are reliable and very willing to work so long as they can feel assured of enjoying the fruits of their labor.)

The Sierra or Caruana Indians [Kitanemuk], under their chief, Vicente, number 36 men, 40 women, and 20 children; they own 22 cows and 33 horses, and cultivate about 30 acres of land as their own farm.

The Laguna or Tatagua tribes [Yokuts], Chief Raimundo, number 80 men, 88 women, and 63 children; they own 30 horses, and have 50 acres of land under cultivation.

The Surillo or Cartaka [sic] tribe [Interior Chumash and Tataviam], Chiefs Chico and Rafael, number 52 men, 65 women, and 45 children; they own 20 horses, and have 40 acres of land under cultivation.

These Indians all belong to the race known in California as the "Diggers;" there are several hundred of the same class living on the Laguna, Tihatchipe, Hockeye, Kern river, Posa creek, and other localities within the bounds of this portion of my district, but many of them prefer hunting and fishing to engaging in the pursuits of agriculture. I have encouraged the Indians to cultivate their own farms, to grow grain and vegetables, and to plant vines and fruit trees near their houses.

I have met with considerable difficulty in getting them to conform to my wishes in these respects, as they have but little faith, from their past experience, that they will reap any reward for their labor. I have assured them that the government will protect them; and I therefore repeat the suggestion made in a former report, "to have the Tejon reservation surveyed, and the land set apart by an act of Congress for the exclusive use of the Indians," this reservation being particularly well adapted to their wants. In this connexion [sic] I would urge upon the department the importance of holding possession of so desirable an Indian farm. It is, I believe, claimed by private parties under a Spanish grant. I am of the opinion, however, that the United States have the best title to it, and I would respectfully suggest that the Secretary of the Interior instruct the United States district attorney of the northern district to examine into the title of said property, as it is one of the best locations for an Indians reservation within the whole southern country. The action of some of the rancheros and white settlers in the neighborhood of the reservation, in driving their stock within its bounds, has caused much trouble and dissatisfaction to the Indians.

There has been no effort made to educate these Indians, and fear, rather than the inculcation of a love of labor for its beneficial results to themselves, has been employed to make them till the ground. Some of them had previously resided at the old missions possess the desire to have their chikhen baptized and taught to read. It would be desirable, I think, to establish a school upon the manual labor system for the instruction of the youth in the economy of labor, and to have the girls taught sewing, and for the inculcation of more correct ideas of morality, and the consequent elevation of the character of the rising generation of both sexes. The Indians generally would in time be more benefited by the inauguration of such a system than by giving them presents.

The buildings on the reservation have suffered considerably from the heavy rains of the past winter, and the mill needs thorough repairs; a large shed should also be built to protect the wagons and agricultural implements. The accompanying map will enable you to form a correct idea of the localities of the several tribes and their farms on this reservation, and also of the encroachments made by the white settlers in the vicinity. Of the urgent necessity existing for the immediate removal of the latter evil! need not dilate. Their presence corrupts the Indians, and makes them discontented under the most favorable treatment and circumstances, and their real object is to break up the reservation and "squat" on the land.